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THE GARDEN'S LURE FOR THE CHILD

“IF all children might be brought up in gardens, there would probably be few criminals raised, and many of the more unhappy developments in the race be finally swept away,” writes Miss Hawthorne, in “The Lure of the Garden,” continuing, that on many of the English estates a portion of the land is set aside for the “children’s garden,” and as much attention is given to its arrangement and completeness as to the rooms reserved in the house for the same young people. In this garden each child has a section for whose appearance and use he is responsible. There is usually a lawn for a playground, trees that can be climbed, and a pavilion or summer-house where lessons can be studied out-of-doors or games played on rainy days. Sometimes there is a stretch of smooth turf for bowls or croquet, or even a tennis ground, according as a greater or less amount of space is available. But, small or great, the place belongs to the children.

Unluckily, many people who have children do not own gardens, or at best spend but a short period of the year within reach of them, and there are many thousands of boys and girls who never know what it is to work in the ground. In an effort to overcome this sad condition, school gardens have been started in different municipalities, particularly the Middle West. The result was and continues to be wonderful. Like Antæus renewing his strength at

each contact with the earth, these children acquired a youth and joy they had never known, turned, in fact, into real children, digging up, as it were, out of the ground they worked, that innocence and happiness which should have been their birthright. Small lads of six and eight, already marked in the books of the law as “incorrigibles,” toiled at the new labour, becoming almost what they ought to be at that age.

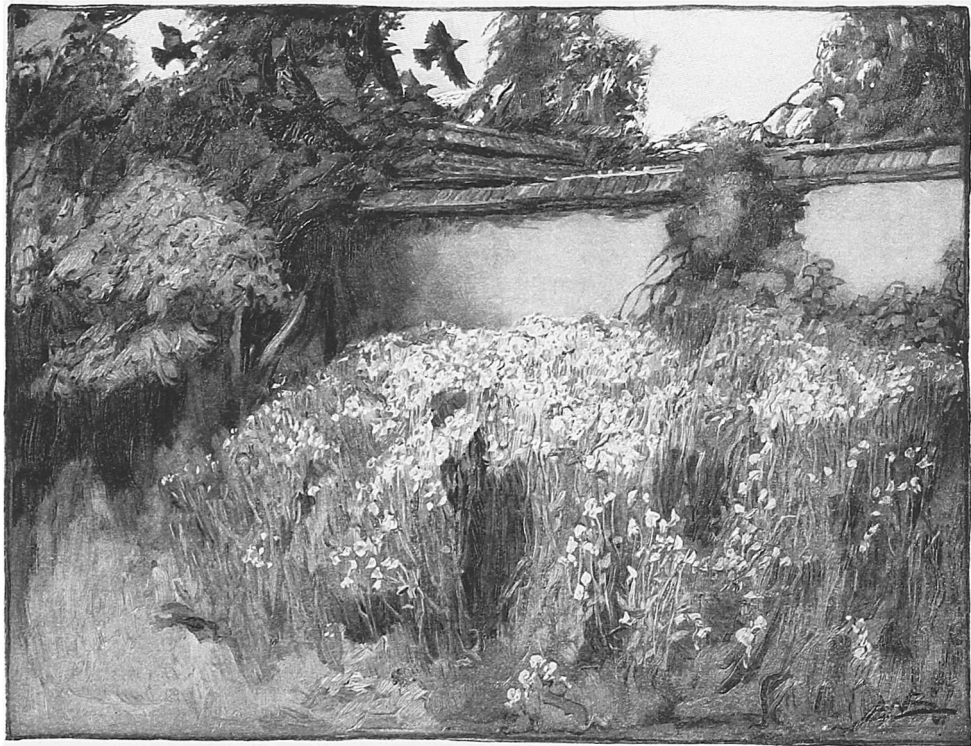
Though your place be small, try to reserve a bit of it for the children; and where this cannot be managed, at least let the youngsters into your own garden. Let them live close to its flowers, even though a small foot treads over the borders now and then. Give them a pair of scissors and let them help cut the blossoms for the house, or snip off the dead ones; teach them to weed, to transplant, to train vines. You will be surprised to see how well a child becomes a garden, how much lovelier each is for the other.

Many a memoir or biography testifies to the strong impression produced upon the mind whose earliest years were spent in a garden, and though most of childhood may have faded into the indistinguishable background of the past, old people have no trouble in finding the old paths, in hearing again the murmur of the fountain and the voices of vanished playmates, or in remembering what flowers had first bloomed for them.

Many things happen in the soul of

a child of which we have little conception, traveling as we do daily farther from the east. Dreams and fancies crowd upon them, and in seeking to adjust the world within to that without, important transmutations occur. It is as well that these adjustments should not be too violent, nor the contrast between dream and reality too marked in the beginning. If your child spends hours musing down there where the

and the other children of the family were occasionally kept awake by the nightingales, singing through the long summer twilights. At the foot of the garden farthest from the house, the wall faced south, and was quite covered behind plum and apricot trees neatly spread and tacked down with pieces of felt. Many a happy morning and smashed finger testified to the earnest labour of small hands, permitted to as-



The Garden Wall

fountain drips musically into the little pond overfull of white and red lilies, you may feel sure that he is building part of a foundation of life not unworthy.

Just as in "Our Grandmothers' Gardens" Miss Hawthorne gives us a charming view of a garden Nathaniel Hawthorne knew and loved, so she has, among her earliest recollections, the memory of an English garden where the fragrance of wall-flowers lay sweet from June to November, and where she

sist in subduing the natural inclination of those trees to stand on their own roots and maintain an independent existence.

No wonder Miss Hawthorne adds that she supposes it is because of this garden, that remains so secure and beloved in her mind, that the spectacle of children growing up in city streets and schoolyards, or even in those unsatisfactory expanses that do duty for gardens in many suburbs, fills her with desperate pity.